



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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COUNTY BOARD CHAIRWOMAN

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MILWAUKEE COUNTY ADOPTS S.E.E.D. LEGISLATION
Supervisors Override Executive Veto of Program to Eliminate “Food Deserts”
Among Elderly, Low-Income Neighborhoods in Milwaukee County

Chairwoman Marina Dimitrijevic today announced Milwaukee County’s adoption of the S.E.E.D. program. S.E.E.D. stands for Sowing, Empowering, and Eliminating Deserts of Food. By a vote of 14 to 4, Supervisors overrode the Executive’s veto and “did the right thing in a real effort to address acute health care disparities through the eradication of food deserts in Milwaukee County,” said Chairwoman Dimitrijevic. Chairwoman Dimitrijevic, along with Supervisors Jason Haas and Khalif Rainey, unveiled the S.E.E.D. Program on Earth Day.

“It’s up to the County Executive to explain how the County has adequate resources to fund an \$80 million commitment for a sports and entertainment complex, but not to fund a one-time expenditure of \$200,000 to combat food insecurity and improve health outcomes for residents of Milwaukee County’s poorest neighborhoods,” Dimitrijevic said. “Although the County Executive may not view food insecurity as an emergency worthy of County intervention, I tend to believe that the thousands of families across the County who struggle to put food on the table each day might disagree.”

Through the S.E.E.D. program, Milwaukee County will partner with the Hunger Task Force, Growing Power, and UW-Extension. Hunger Task Force will operate a Mobile Market within the county to serve residents who live in food deserts, coordinating with the existing Stockbox delivery program to our seniors. This Mobile Market will provide opportunities for residents to purchase nutritious food in neighborhoods while accepting food benefits.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines food deserts as “urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may have no food access or are served only by fast food restaurants and convenience stores that offer few healthy, affordable food options.”

“Milwaukee County faces acute challenges, including inter-related health disparities,” Dimitrijevic said. “In the long run, infant mortality, obesity and high blood pressure are more costly to the community than an upfront, one-time investment in these partnerships with local organizations to create healthier options for our residents.”

Under the S.E.E.D. program, the County also will establish a long-term partnership with Growing Power to establish Urban Orchards. Growing Power and the County will pursue a minimum of 10 acres of County land on which to plant 4,000 fruit trees.

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